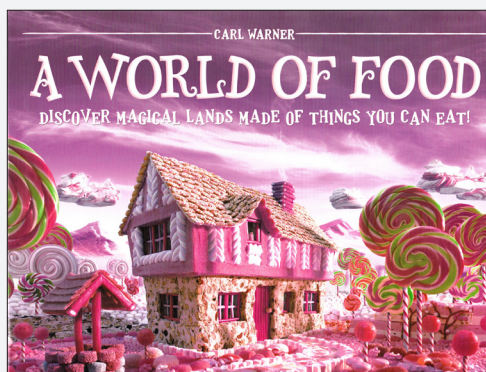


Second Reaction: Implementing a Picture Book for Differentiated Learning in the Art Room

Warner, Carl. *A World of Food*. New York: Abrams, 2012.

Jana Hankins



"Fifty percent of the brain's pathways are devoted to vision," said Dr. Laura Balcer to CNN in 2011. This must be one reason why the detailed, monochromatic, food-themed landscape compositions in *A World of Food* garnered "oohs" and "ahhhs" from 8th grade visual art students at Buckeye Valley Middle School in Delaware, Ohio. The visual impact of colors, textures, and objects was immediate and impressive.

The illustrations in *A World of Food* were utilized in my art classroom as a visual resource for a differentiated group of gifted students as inspiration to create a visually referenced self-portrait. Students compared Guiseppe Arcimboldo's 14th century painted juxtapositions of food objects to Carl Warner's photos of real compositions of edible materials. The two artists combined food and natural objects into lively, aesthetic portraits (Arcimboldo) and landscapes (Warner) that are detailed and clever. Warner's book illustrations and Arcimboldo's portraits inspired my middle school students to create their own related images, explore art history, research-technology based photographic imagery, and to express themselves.

Some of the students who were drawn to the objects in the landscapes of *A World of Food* created drawings that were object based. One youngster, for example, filled her portrait with breakfast foods. Her image had bacon hair, a banana throat, and a fried egg and doughnut torso. Other students created drawings that were color based. One student focused on red items such as spaghetti, red peppers, ketchup, strawberries, and apples.

When the unit was complete, one student said that a good title for this project would be: "You Are What You Eat." Another student retorted with, "I hope not, because my portrait is filled with nothing but candy bars and French fries."

In my opinion, this book is filled with stimulating and creative imagery which is themed by color. The variety of values, tones, and textures brings the viewer right into a world of food where the poetry of the text continues to paint pictures in the mind of the reader. Readers are encouraged to listen, look, and enjoy. It is in the art room, however, that Warner's *A World of Food* fits best as a starting point for creative thinking, a tie into art history, and some enthusiastic student reactions from the very first page to the last.



Jana Hankins' 8th grade art students use Carl Warner's *A World of Food* as inspiration for their own artistic creations.

Works Cited

Gangwer, Timothy. "Fifty Percent of the Brain's Pathways are Devoted to Vision," said Dr. Laura Balcer." *The Visual Teaching Network*. Visual Teaching Alliance. 02 Feb. 2011. Web. < <http://visualteaching.ning.com/profiles/blogs/fifty-percent-of-the-brains>>.

About the Author

Jana Hankins is an art teacher, visual artist, and volleyball coach at Buckeye Valley Middle School in Delaware, Ohio. She is a graduate of Syracuse University's School of Visual and Performing Arts.

Invitation to Readers

The editors of *First Opinions*, *Second Reactions* invite those who share books with children to sign up to review and perhaps photograph classroom projects as a further way to share our experiences. Volunteers should contact Ann Koci, Editorial Assistant, at akoci@purdue.edu.